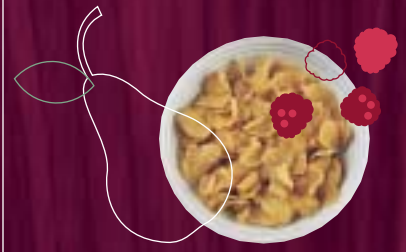


# Health Facts



## Choose Carbohydrates Wisely

Foods containing carbohydrates are part of a healthful diet because they provide dietary fiber, sugars, and starches that help the body function well. The sugars and starches in foods supply energy to the body in the form of glucose, which is used to fuel your brain and nervous system.

A fiber-rich diet has many benefits. For example, it helps protect against heart disease and promotes regularity. Constipation that affects many older adults may be caused by certain medications or too low a fluid intake.

Your best carbohydrate-containing foods are nutrient-packed foods in several of the basic food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, and milk and milk products. Choosing these foods within your calorie requirements each day may help your heart stay healthy and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

It's important to *choose carbohydrates wisely*. Sugars can be naturally present in foods such as the fructose in fruit or the lactose in milk. Sugars are also added to food during processing or preparation, such as high-fructose corn syrup in sweetened beverages. Foods with added sugar are often high in calories and low in nutrients—and that combination *doesn't* help your body. Added sugars are those added to foods during processing or preparation such as high-fructose corn syrup in sweetened beverages or baked products, honey, sugar, or molasses.

### HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

**Choose fiber-rich fruits, vegetables, and whole grains often.**

**Focus on fruits:** Eat a variety of fruits. Make the most of your choices—fresh, frozen, canned, or dried, rather than fruit juice.

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)

Servings Per Container 2

### Amount Per Serving

**Calories** 250      Calories from Fat 110

**% Daily Value\***

**Total Fat** 12g      18%

Saturated Fat 3g      15%

Trans Fat 3g

**Cholesterol** 30mg      10%

**Sodium** 470mg      20%

**Potassium** 700mg      20%

**Total Carbohydrate** 31g      10%

Dietary Fiber 0g      0%

Sugars 5g

**Protein** 5g

Vitamin A      4%

Vitamin C      2%

Calcium      20%

Iron      4%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

### **Vary your vegetables:**

- Eat more dark green vegetables such as broccoli, kale, and other dark leafy greens. Try more orange vegetables, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and winter squash.
- Legumes—such as dry beans and peas—are especially rich in dietary fiber and should be consumed several times per week.

**Make at least half your grains whole:** Eat at least 3 ounce equivalents of whole-grain products daily. Examples of whole grains are whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, and pasta. Other examples are brown and wild rice. One slice (1 ounce) of whole-grain bread, 1/2 cup cooked brown rice, and 1/2 cup of cooked oatmeal together are equivalent to 3 ounces of whole grains.

If you eat a 1,600-calorie diet, you will need approximately 1 1/2 to 2 cups of fruit each day, 2 cups of vegetables each day, 1/2 cup of dry beans or peas (legumes) most days (4 to 5 times a week), and 5 ounce equivalents of grains (at least 3 ounces should be whole grains) each day.

If you eat a 2,000-calorie diet, you will need approximately 2 to 2 1/2 cups of fruit each day, 2 to 2 1/2 cups of vegetables each day, 1/2 cup of dry beans or peas (legumes) most days (4 to 5 times a week), and 7 ounce equivalents of grains (at least 4 ounces should be whole grains) each day.

### **Many packaged foods have fiber information on the front of the package.**

For example, the package might say “excellent source of fiber,” “rich in fiber,” or “high in fiber.” The Nutrition Facts label will list the amount of dietary fiber in a serving and the percent Daily Value (% DV). Look at the % DV column—5% DV or less is low in dietary fiber, and 20% DV or more is high.

### **Check the product name and ingredient list.**

For many, but not all “whole-grain” food products, the words “whole” or “whole grain” may appear before the name (e.g., whole-wheat bread). But, because whole-grain foods cannot necessarily be identified by their color or name (brown bread, 9-grain bread, hearty grains bread, mixed grain bread, etc. are not always “whole-grain”), you need to look at the ingredient list. The whole grain should be the first ingredient listed. The following are some examples of how whole grains could be listed:

whole wheat	wild rice
brown rice	whole oats/oatmeal
buckwheat	whole rye
popcorn	whole grain barley
bulgur (cracked wheat)	

### **How much dietary fiber do I need?**

The recommended dietary fiber intake is 14 grams per 1,000 calories consumed.

For example, if you’re a sedentary older woman who needs 1,600 calories a day, you should be aiming for 22 grams of dietary fiber a day. You could meet this goal by eating 1/2 cup stewed prunes (3.8 grams) and a whole-wheat English muffin (4.4 grams) for breakfast, 1/2 cup cooked cowpeas (5.6 grams) with lunch, and 1/2 cup of green peas (4.4 grams) and 1 medium boiled sweet potato without peel (3.9 grams) with dinner.

If you’re a sedentary older man who needs 2,000 calories a day, you should be aiming for 28 grams of dietary fiber a day. You could meet this goal by eating 1 cup raspberries (8 grams) and a whole-wheat English muffin (4.4 grams) for breakfast, 1/2 cup black beans (7.5 grams) with lunch, and 1 cup of mixed vegetables (8 grams) with dinner.

## What foods contain dietary fiber and how much do they contain?

Here are some examples.

Food	Grams of fiber	% DV*
1/2 c cooked navy beans	9.5 g	38% DV
1/2 c ready-to-eat 100% bran cereal	8.8 g	35% DV
1/2 c cooked lentils	7.8 g	31% DV
1 medium baked sweet potato with skin	4.8 g	19% DV
1 small raw pear	4.3 g	17% DV
1/2 c mixed vegetables	4.0 g	16% DV
1 medium baked potato with skin	3.8 g	15% DV
1/2 c stewed prunes	3.8 g	15% DV
1 medium raw orange	3.1 g	12% DV
1/2 c cooked broccoli	2.8 g	11% DV

\* % Daily Values (DV) listed in this column are based on the food amounts listed in the table. The DV for dietary fiber is 25 grams.

## Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugars or caloric sweeteners.

The Nutrition Facts label says how many grams of sugar the food contains, but does not list added sugars separately. The amount listed includes sugars that are naturally present in foods (such as fructose in fruit or lactose in milk) and sugars added to the food during processing or preparation.

Added sugars, also known as caloric sweeteners, provide calories but few or no essential nutrients. So, the more foods with added sugars you eat, the more difficult it becomes to get the nutrients you need without eating too many calories and gaining weight.

## How do I know how much sugar is in a food?

On packaged foods, look on the ingredient list, where the ingredients are listed in order of amount by weight from most to least. Foods that

have added sugars as one of the first few ingredients may be high in total sugars. Check the Nutrition Facts label to determine the amount of sugars per serving. The amount listed includes sugars that are naturally occurring (such as fructose in fruit) and sugars added to the food during processing or preparation. Use these conversion factors to visualize the total amount of sugar (natural and added) in one serving of a food item: 4 grams of sugar = ~1 teaspoon = ~16 calories.

Other names for added sugars in an ingredient list include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert corn syrup, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, molasses, maple syrup, raw sugar, sucrose, and syrup. Below is an example of an ingredient list for a fruit yogurt.

**INGREDIENTS:** CULTURED GRADE A REDUCED FAT MILK, APPLES, HIGH-FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, CINNAMON, NUTMEG, NATURAL FLAVORS, AND PECTIN. CONTAINS ACTIVE YOGURT AND L. ACIDOPHILUS CULTURES.

Also, check the front of food products' packaging for guidance. Sometimes the label will say "sugar-free" or "no added sugars."

Foods from restaurants, convenience stores, or other food stores may also have added sugar. The foods that contribute the most added sugar to diets of Americans are regular soft drinks; sugars and candy; cakes, cookies, and pies; fruit drinks, such as fruit punch; milk products, such as ice cream, sweetened yogurt, and sweetened milk; and sweetened grains, such as cinnamon toast and honey-nut waffles.

For more information on sugar, look in the chapters in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, 2005 at [www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines). Appendix A has healthy eating plans that provide information about how much added sugar you may be able to include in your diet.

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